

ILO, IOM and UN Women
Joint Press Statement
International Migrants Day | 18 December 2022

The Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia (GOALS) Programme Supports Sustainable and Inclusive Labour Migration Governance Frameworks in the Region.

Location

Colombo / Dhaka / New Delhi

On this International Migrants Day¹, the world lauds the socio-cultural and economic contributions of the 169 million² migrant workers around the world who help boost economies and strengthen the social fabric of communities.

Human mobility has been an enduring feature of our global history and is as pertinent today as it ever was given its inextricable link with sustainable development. Migration has the potential to deliver a triple development win for countries of origin, destination and for migrant workers and their families. Yet, the migration process implies complex challenges in terms of governance, migrant workers' protection, and international cooperation.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted typical labour migration and mobility patterns, severely impeding movement due to travel restrictions. In consequence, access to opportunity was limited and existing challenges in recruitment, pay and conditions, access to justice and sustainable reintegration on return to countries of origin were further exacerbated. Although the direct impacts of the pandemic have receded, there remains an urgent need for inclusive, sustainable and systemic actions across levels to support decent work for all migrant workers.

Through our joint work in implementing the 'Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia' (GOALS) Programme³, we reiterate our commitment to protect the dignity of all migrant workers and to promote decent work and sustainable reintegration for the benefit of all.

¹ In 1990, the General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families ([A/RES/45/158](#)). On 4 December 2000, the General Assembly, taking into account the large and increasing number of migrants in the world, proclaimed 18 December International Migrants Day ([A/RES/55/93](#)).

²) ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers Results and Methodology Third edition, 2021 [wcms_808935.pdf \(ilo.org\)](#)

³ 'Governance of Labour Migration in South and South-East Asia (GOALS)' is a Joint Regional Programme between the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Our interventions are grounded in the principles of international labour standards and human rights, and a commitment to a cooperative approach to optimize the overall benefits of labour migration and address the risks and challenges for migrant workers and their families in countries of origin, transit, and destination. We further support policy dialogues amongst the Colombo Process Member States⁴ to share good practices and strengthen collaboration to facilitate effective labour migration governance.

We are committed to working together with government and non-government partners to help migrant workers by:

- i) Promoting fair and ethical recruitment practices
- ii) Recognizing and harmonizing qualifications and skills
- iii) Developing and piloting guidelines for sustainable reintegration of returnee migrant workers

Recognizing the different realities that women, men, gender diverse people and other marginalized groups experience in the labour migration journey, we also reaffirm our commitment to working towards increased data and understanding on the rights and contributions of migrant workers, especially women, leading to more equitable policies and practices.

Together with Colombo Process Member States, employers and workers' organizations, civil society and academia, ***ILO, IOM and UN Women stand committed*** to support sustainable and inclusive labour migration governance frameworks in the region.

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⁴ The Colombo Process is a Regional Consultative Process on the management of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origins in Asia, established in 2003 in response to calls from Asian labour sending countries to optimize the benefits of organized labour migration whilst protecting migrants from exploitative practices in recruitment and employment. [About the Colombo Process - Colombo Process](#)